



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Winnemucca District Office
Black Rock Field Office
5100 East Winnemucca Boulevard
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445
Phone: (775) 623-1500 Fax: (775) 623-1503
Email: wfoweb@blm.gov
www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/wfo.html

In Reply Refer To:
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To: McGee Mountain HMA Monitoring File
From: Garrett Swisher Wild Horse and Burro Specialist

Monitoring Notes with Attachments

McGee Mountain HMA March 13, 2015 Monitoring/Status Check

I went to the McGee Mountain HMA on March 13th 2015 for a status check/forage and water availability check.

While in the area I performed three utilization studies. The three sites were located outside of the HMA, as the majority of the wild burros reside outside of the HMA boundary. The sites are located in sagebrush-grassland vegetation communities with Bottlebrush Squirrel Tail, Sandberg's Bluegrass, and Bud Sagebrush the dominant species, with a few small salt grass meadows near the springs.

The appropriate management level for this HMA is 25-41 wild burros with a predicted population currently of over 100 wild burros.

The utilization on the sites visited is as follows:

SITE	Bud Sage	DISP
MM2	44.6%	NA
MM3	47.3%	NA
Saltgrass Meadow	NA	58%

I saw around 85 wild burros within a 5 mile radius of Gridley Lake with an average BCS of 3.5 - 4.5. There is adequate forage and water available for the wild burros right now in the areas that I monitored, however the budsage will dry out and senesce in the next month or so. There was very little sign in the HMA, I did not see a burro at all within the boundary, but do know from talks with the permittee there are around 12-15 that stay on McGee Mountain year round. There is no naturally occurring water within the HMA boundary; therefore most of the wild burros reside outside of the HMA, mostly around Gridley Lake. Burros have been reported and

documented moving onto the Knott Creek Allotment and have been causing issues with the private landowner at the Alder Creek Ranch. I have talked with the landowner and will be setting up a small water trap around a water trough that splits his private and the BLM. I will trap a the 15-25 burro in that area and re-locate them back to the HMA near the one reservoir that is holding water.

Photos:



MM-3



MM-2



Typical Budsage in both transects.



Burros near Saltgrass Meadow. BCS 4, Jenny on the right is pregnant.



Burros BCS 4.5